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The Game of Participation in Amsterdam East: An Alternative to the Neoliberal or a Neoliberal Alternative?

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Introduction

In a recent talk in the Netherlands, Saskia Sassen (2016) conceptualized the city as a frontier zone: a space where actors from different fields encounter each other and where established rules of engagement do not yet exist. Sassen did not romanticize this situation, acknowledging that struggle on the frontiers can lead to either "freedom or death." However, she stressed the role of modest neighborhoods as spaces where, through a new constellation of actors, the powerless have the potential to directly confront dominant power and "make history." In this chapter, we pick up this proposition and ask how such a novel constellation of actors can intervene in urban governance spaces to enable and create alternative urban futures. A significant aspect of this question is the institutional-regulatory context in which those new constellations are born.

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In the last decades, government-provided, invited participatory spaces for public engagement create new instances of encounters among previously separate actors (Cornwall, 2004). Collaboration, partnership, and co-production are the policy catchwords used when discussing the division of roles for stakeholders in these invited spaces. In Western welfare states, these participatory policies are increasingly embedded in the regulatory context of neoliberal urban and welfare policies, administrative decentralization, and neighborhood regeneration. State-initiated participatory processes and their regulatory contexts produce both specific challenges and opportunities for enabling alternative urban processes.

The challenges are marked by co-optation, loss of autonomy, and exclusion and further disempowerment of the vulnerable (Lee, McQuarrie, & Walker, 2015; Purcell, 2008). From a governmentality perspective, the challenges include the recentralizing state power,[1] responsibilization of the individual, the privileged access of already powerful actors, and corroding channels of representation, legitimacy, and accountability (Kokx & Van Kempen, 2010; Swyngedouw, 2005; Taylor, 2007). As for the opportunities, participation is seen as a chance to bridge the gap between representative democracy and participatory democracy and to tackle the very problems of diminished legitimacy, accountability, and inequalities (Fung, 2009). It can also be exploited, as an existing neoliberal technique, to mobilize state actors for political projects (Ferguson, 2010; Fisker, 2016; Holloway, 2005; McGuirk & O'Neill, 2012). From the social movements perspective, the changes to political structures called for by participatory processes can be turned into political opportunities for transformation (Newman, Barnes, Sullivan, & Knops, 2004; Taylor, 2007). For example, participation can be exploited to organize external resources for groups, create new alliances, and establish a power base for new, previously excluded actors (Taylor, 2007).

[1] In particular, the governmentality perspective highlights the prevalence of the two simultaneous albeit contrasting processes of administrative decentralization and the recentralization of state control. The former is understood as the involvement of civil society and market actors in governance and/or devolving state functions to sub-national levels. The recentralization of political control manifests in the dominance of neoliberal discourse on appropriate individual and civic conduct and in the performance-driven institutionalized audit culture (see also Kokx & Van Kempen, 2010; Swyngedouw, 2005; Taylor, 2007).

In light of these differing views on whether participatory spaces serve progressive action or merely act as instruments for neoliberal politics, empirical research is called for to provide contextualization and nuance to the practices and intentions in these spaces (see also Silver, Scott, & Kazepov, 2010; Thuesen & Rasmussen, 2015). Such research can reveal how and whether alternative urban processes are significantly different from existing urban processes. Such research should focus on "how participatory structures and political agency constitute each other" instead of looking at whether citizen initiatives are co-opted by participatory structures (Kemp, Lebuhn, & Rattner, 2015, p. 704). Doing so would make it possible to find "cracks"—defined by Holloway (2010) as spaces and moments of alternative doings that push toward self-determination—within the system of dominant logic. Therefore, we take this latter analytical approach to cooperation and contestation in participatory governance spaces. To decipher the power dynamics in participatory government spaces, we apply Bourdieu's relational perspective. Bourdieu's attempt to reconcile the agency-structure duality is relevant to the relationship between political agency and wider participatory and governance structures.

Our empirical case is situated in the district of Amsterdam East, in the Indische neighborhood, where we investigated the specific participatory efforts and enabling strategies of a citizen group, the Meevaart Development Group (MDG). The group's members are boundary spanners between local government and the citizenry, and they engage with and utilize the rhetoric of co-creation in their efforts to enable alternatives to the "business-as-usual" trajectories of participatory neighborhood governance. Empirical data were collected between 2014 and 2016 through observing stakeholder meetings and conducting informal talks and interviews in the context of a larger ethnographic research. Secondary data consisted of policy documents and other neighborhood-related documents. In this chapter, we first discuss the Dutch national institutional and policy context then conceptualize participation as a Bourdieusian game, a field of power relations. We then analyze our case using this Bourdieusian framework in the particular institutional and policy context of the Indische neighborhood.

An Alternative to What?

The institutional-administrative context in which governance mechanisms and urban policies are developed and implemented in the Netherlands reflects hybrid neoliberal steering: it is aimed at city competitiveness but also based on egalitarian, social democratic principles that work against socio-spatial fragmentation (Kokx & Van Kempen, 2010). The regulatory context of recent participation policies continues this tradition. Regulations are area based (Specht, 2012; Van Gent, Musterd, & Ostendorf, 2009) or territorial (De Wilde, 2015), with the state selecting specific disadvantaged neighborhoods as targets of policy implementation based on demographic, social, and economic criteria. This shows path dependency (see Brenner & Theodore, 2002) in that, since WWII, the central state has assumed responsibility for local service provisions (Uitermark, 2003). These are administered within a three-tier system of state, provinces, and municipalities and paired with a corporatist negotiation culture based on compromise and cooperation (Uitermark, 2003). Each tier has its own authority; however, since the lower tiers are not financially autonomous, they are subject to supervision and largely dependent on central state budgets (Zwaan, 2017), suggesting a hierarchical (vertical) relationship. Until 2014, Amsterdam had a fourth tier of sub-municipalities, each with its own city council and committee.

Urban policies aimed at the quality and quantity of post-War housing were introduced as early as the 1960s (Specht, 2012). With the inflow of Moroccan and Turkish low-income guest workers in the 1980s, policies focused on extending social housing. However, this focus ended in the 1990s, with the introduction of the Big Cities Program (BCP; *Grote Steden Beleid, GSB*), the policy framework of urban restructuring in place from 1994 to 2009. This neighborhood-oriented social renewal plan was made part of a city-oriented national development strategy (Uitermark, 2003). The BCP linked the weak market position and unfavorable socioeconomic indicators of some urban neighborhoods with the presence of low-income minority residents. Social mixing, increasing the percentage of owner-occupied houses with affluent households, was promoted as a way to improve the "livability" of these neighborhoods (MVROM,

1997). This process was aptly identified by some as state-led gentrification (Smets & Sneep, 2017; Uitermark & Bosker, 2014; Uitermark, Duyvendak, & Kleinhans, 2007). Social housing corporations implemented the policy by incrementally selling their stock of social housing on the free market. They also reported policy results upward to the state. In the later years of the BCP, the livability narrative took on a more social dimension and citizen participation became more prevalent in urban policymaking. The Ministry of Living, Neighborhoods, and Integration, established in 2007, launched the 40 Neighborhood Program, which labeled disadvantaged neighborhoods based on socioeconomic indicators. The program allocated participation budgets to citizen initiatives that were expected to improve neighborhood livability.

A wide range of research shows that there were gaps between the aims and effects of urban restructuring policies (see Smets & Watt, 2017). For example, ethnic minorities were marginalized (Uitermark, 2003), and tensions developed between ethnic and nonethnic Dutch (Uitermark et al., 2007). Social mixing did not lead to integration (Smets & Sneep, 2017) because the complexities of social relations (Smets & Den Uyl, 2008) and neighborhoods' socioeconomic structural problems (Van Gent et al., 2009) were both neglected. These "flagship" policies generally indicated political interests (Kokx & Van Kempen, 2010), as evidenced by their overt focus on results—either physical and thus visible (i.e., increased housing; Van Gent et al., 2009) or administrative (i.e., government reports).

Citizen mobilization was also part of a national welfare retrenchment and decentralization program initiated by the 2007 Social Support Act (SSA; *Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning, WMO*). This law emphasized responsibility and self-reliance and encouraged both vulnerable and more resilient individuals to participate in the informal care of others. Municipalities were to act as implementing bodies and to report results upward. In the second stage of the SSA, in 2015, three welfare domains—work and income, care of the elderly and the chronically ill, and youth care—were decentralized to the municipal level. While the discursive emphasis was on customized provision and bringing providers closer to vulnerable citizens, this stage reflected a strong emphasis on effectiveness and cost efficiency: before decentralization, funds were reduced by more than 75% (Zwaan, 2017), coupled with the rhetoric of "do more with less"

(Trommel, 2014, translated from Dutch). Two lines of exclusion also occurred. First, the focus on results led to municipal preference for professionals as executors, instead of citizen organizations (De Wilde, Hurenkamp, & Tonkens, 2014; Van Ankeren, Tonkens, & Verhoeven, 2010). Second, participation was limited to public and social entrepreneurs and gentrifiers, and excluded the most vulnerable (De Wilde et al., 2014; Uitermark, 2012; Verhoeven & Ham, 2010). It is in this national policy context wherein our case in the Indische neighborhood unfolds. Next, we introduce how the case can be deciphered through a Bourdieusian lens.

The Game of Participation

In a Bourdieusian reading, neoliberalism can be seen as a global *doxa* (Chopra, 2003), representing the all-encompassing, taken-for-granted rules and values of the economic field. National states and the bureaucratic field are the core agents of imposing neoliberal market principles that colonize, and thereby ignore and dismantle, social relations (Bourdieu & Farage, 1994). They also create complicit subjects by instilling those principles in human activities (Wacquant, 2012). Thus, the state is a locus of symbolic power; it is ingrained with the principles of the widespread economic field that unifies and colonizes different fields. This in turn reciprocally establishes relations of domination in social fields, which manifest in the reproduction of inequalities (Cronin, 1996). Accordingly, in the game of participation, we see the dismantling of "the social" and the favoring of the individual, the market, and the calculable, as well as the exclusion of the historically disadvantaged, who lack economic and cultural capital. Though this urban sociological perspective emphasizes the commodification of the social, it is commensurate with the political economy perspective in that both condemn the fact that neoliberal policies liberate and uplift the strong at the top while they deepen inequalities, anxieties, and insecurity at the bottom (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Wacquant, 2012). Moreover, both views emphasize the historical, contextual embeddedness of neoliberal restructuring: "actually existing neoliberalism" plays out in inherited institutional environments and in specific supranational, national, regional, and urban contexts (Brenner & Theodore, 2002).

Yet, the Bourdieusian perspective creates new analytical openings on two grounds. First, a Bourdieusian perspective allows one to look beyond the scope of economic resources. With Bourdieu, the concept of capital is extended from an economic understanding to cultural and social understandings; capital becomes a resource or an advantage, like "aces in the game of cards" (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 724). As such, the concept extends to social relations and power struggles and also makes it possible to look at other types of resources that facilitate change. Second, Bourdieu's concept of field and its interrelated concepts hold an analytical potential regarding political opportunities. The new constellation of various actors, organizations, and levels of government can be seen as a rhizome of intermingling fields of power relations with their own historically ingrained habitus. These actors now have to position themselves in the new common field in which collaboration and contestation take place against the background of policy implementation. This novel field is culturally heterogeneous, and consensual schemes of its doxa are less established and specified, which extends the scope of agentic capacity (Cronin, 1996). In contemporary governance, the rules of participation and local implementation are established on-the-go, by means of experimentation, in an era when political decision-making is increasingly dependent on linguistic coding and the mobilization of discourse (i.e., doxic) alliances (Swyngedouw, 2005; Taylor, 2007). This analytical conceptualization of a new common field corresponds with Sassen's city-as-frontier metaphor.

The city-as-frontier opens up because the contemporary state is not unified per se in the Bourdieusian sense, but is rather "porous [and] fragmented" (Fisker, 2016), "peopled and dispersed" (McGuirk & O'Neill, 2012), which makes it more susceptible to disruption. For example, creating organizational forms that are asymmetric to "capitalist forms" of organizing—forms that focus on relations between people instead of relations between things—can go "in-and-against-and-beyond" established forms (Holloway, 2005, p. 40). Agents can transform the limiting nature of doxic language by making it explicit—which disrupts dominant discourses—thereby allowing the unequal distribution of capital to be revealed and the valued types of capital to be revalued. Furthermore, state actors can be mobilized as agents of these disruptions (Fisker, 2016).

Within this conceptual realm, we looked at the relationship between the MDG and the city district implementing neoliberal policies in Amsterdam East. We asked the following questions: what are the rules of the game (i.e., doxa)? What are the valued types of capital and how do citizens reveal, revalue, and appropriate them?

Co-creating the Local Rules of the Game

The city of Amsterdam is renowned as being historically diverse, tolerant, and open, and doing things in its own particular way. The coexistence of economic and social liberalism is ingrained in the city's administrative system, in which the Indische neighborhood is embedded. The neighborhood is situated on the East side of the city center within the highway ring. It is a prime example of the disadvantaged, up-and-coming neighborhoods that have been the focus of both urban and participation policies in the Netherlands. The neighborhood was predominantly ethnic Dutch until the 1970s, when Moroccan and Turkish immigrants began arriving. In recent years, the small neighborhood of about 41,000 residents has witnessed gentrification. Because it has been the target of all national urban renewal programs, the housing stock has been restructured and public spaces have been revitalized to attract business investments and to diversify the retail economy. Hochstenbach (2015) identifies gentrification in the Indische neighborhood as marginal, meaning that the displacement of sitting, non-gentrifier residents is slow, and thus gentrifiers and non-gentrifiers cohabitate. Moreover, marginal gentrification suggests that incoming gentrifiers are typically low income groups themselves, who reject dominant suburban living and are more open to the diversity and affordability of inner city neighborhoods such as the Indische neighborhood. As such, new residents of the neighborhood include students and the creative class (see Boersma, Langen, & Smets, 2013), as well as social entrepreneurs.

The MDG's founders, Sander and Arvin,[2] got actively engaged in the neighborhood because Arvin was a local resident. Both have accumulated considerable cultural, political, and social capital inside and outside of state institutions due to their careers as policymakers and civil servants at

[2] Both respondents were extensively interviewed during the fieldwork. The names are pseudonyms.

various municipalities and educational institutions. They have considerable knowledge about the logics, practices, and stakes involved in local political and bureaucratic fields. Both are members of the GreenLeft Party, and Sander was a district council member in Rotterdam before becoming a volunteer and social entrepreneur in various urban projects. Sander and Arvin became active in the midst of polarizing national societal and political discourses at the beginning of the millennium, which they aimed to counter on the local level. Additionally, their accounts contain value propositions such as the self-determination and critical capacity of citizens, more direct forms of democracy and more horizontal government-citizen relationships. The duo saw an opportunity for local action in the advent of participatory policies.

When, in 2007, the neighborhood became a focus of the 40 Neighborhood Program, participation budgets started to flow in. The city district put citizen participation, unemployment, and social cohesion on the agenda and created a think tank in which citizens (including Arvin) advised officials on the allocation of participation budgets. With the SSA, Amsterdam was now responsible for implementing various welfare tasks in ways that best suited the city. In the Indische neighborhood, the privatization of welfare provisions a year before meant that many neighborhood centers had closed and welfare professionals and civil groups had been displaced, creating a vacuum in the local welfare landscape. In 2008, Arvin and Sander helped establish the Timorplein Community, a network of local social and public entrepreneurs who facilitated activities and discussions regarding citizens' desires for their neighborhood. The aim was to forge social mobility by building solidarity between the more affluent entrepreneurs and the more vulnerable in the neighborhood, which suggests that the initiative resonated with the policy doxa of social mixing.

In 2009, the Timorplein Community invited various local institutions, council members, and other municipal officials to a participation workshop (Azarhoosh & Mehlkopf, 2009). On this meeting, Sander and Arvin redefined the governmental catchword of social cohesion according to a community development principle: they focused on the positives—the potentials and ambitions that were already present in the neighborhood—rather than on the neighborhood's problems. They claimed space for wider

citizen participation by defining citizens' roles as contributors to policy-making rather than simply executors of the district's agenda. Here, the discourse was turned around: if the municipality would pay attention to what citizens wanted, ask questions instead of imposing answers, pose challenges instead of defining problems, and let citizens organize themselves, hidden ambitions and potentials could be discovered. Citizens should be seen as local experts, as "capital in natura" (Azarhoosh & Mehlkopf, 2009, p. 50, translated from Dutch). In short, the workshop redefined the citizens' ambitions and potentials as an asset and participation as something born of the dynamic between these ambitions and potentials.

Moreover, the Timorplein Community inventoried all resources of both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in the neighborhood as a means to reach these policy goals. They showed that the SSA's focus on individual responsibilities and self-reliance could only make sense on the societal and community levels—as it had to do with connecting the self-reliant and the non-self-reliant. They demonstrated that facilitating social connections could contribute to solving the problems around employment, education, and social cohesion, all focus areas of the think tank. This logic suggested that locally targeted participation budgets of the 40 Neighborhood Program and SSA budgets should be placed into a common pool of resources furthering neighborhood participation. Thus, they demanded that budgets, which were being thus far predominantly given to local institutions, be reorganized so that local initiatives are being more widely supported. In this sense, the local government would deliver funds (economic capital) to citizens' initiatives, while local welfare organizations, housing corporations and more affluent entrepreneurs would deliver provisions in the form of facilitation, support, and buildings (economic, social, and cultural capital). In this way, all could work together to further participation and social cohesion, which is based not only on social relations but on other types of capital as well. The workshop also evoked and worked with the sentiment of localism, advocating that all parties "*of and for* our neighborhood" should work together and combine resources. This strategy of not changing the policy language but turning around the doxa of what it represents created more room for citizens as potential co-producers in the field of participation.

The workshop's interventions to the municipality's agenda happened early enough, just as institutions were embarking on their new task of

policy implementation. While the change in discourse evoked some resistance and chaos in institutional circles, it initiated the foundation of a new culture among neighborhood stakeholders, a culture that was then transplanted into communities around the Meevaart.

Asymmetric Organizational Forms

The MDG began in 2010, when Sander and Arvin got the keys to the Meevaart neighborhood center. Because of the district's trust in Sander and Arvin and its interest in developing run-down societal real estate, officials agreed to transfer management of the building to the citizens and kept sponsoring it with a yearly subsidy. The message was simple: the Meevaart building was to be exploited as a social experimental space for citizen initiatives.

The building's management was provided by the participants of the educational course called Facilitation Management that the MDG's board designed. The program took perpetually unemployed residents and arranged workfare benefits for them to better their chances of reintegrating into the labor market. Room scheduling was to be negotiated between the initiatives, which could use the rooms for free, while commercial users paid rent. This type of organizational structure can be seen as asymmetric because it goes against conventional community center management in which a welfare organization has a say in programming and thus sees citizens as users of welfare services. Instead, citizens were the primary producers in this alternative field (see Cornwall & Gaventa, 2000).

The Meevaart model was a success story for the city district. It became a pioneering model for citizen activities, a place where different groups could meet and arrange events and services: it was the "house of the neighborhood," as the 2012 SSA policy plan called initiatives based on the same model (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2012; translated from Dutch). Local institutions needed to show results in local participation, to which engaging with local citizens and collecting information about what is happening in the neighborhood contributed considerably. Thus, by interacting with local initiators, they produced results showing that co-creation works.

Sander and Arvin recognized these new stakes of the institutional actors in the game of participation and that these new stakes changed the

relative power position of the stakeholders for the benefit of the citizenry. This made an uncompromising, activist approach possible, which warranted the Meevaart's autonomy and prevented co-optation by the district. The MDG's strategy was to prioritize the Meevaart's autonomy over its survival. Sander said that whenever the district wanted to dictate how the center should be operated, they would put the keys on the table and say that the district could have the building back. He explained:

> If you consider your organization important [in itself], you are going to make compromises. Then your interest is the continuity of your organization. (Sander)

No compromises were made that would lead to co-optation. For example, when the district asked for a detailed report on user groups and programming, the MDG noted that this was not budgeted in the subsidy agreement, so the municipality would have to extend the budget. Since then, no such report has been requested. These examples show that the policy of co-creation enabled the organization of an alternative, asymmetric form of welfare. The fact that this form was based on codependence between stakeholders allowed for acts of micro-resistance that prevented co-optation and stretched the frame of negotiation.

In addition, knowing what the stakes in the participation game were for local government created space to disrupt the conventional distribution of capital on the field. Namely, the MDG realized that the more information public officials have about citizen initiatives in the neighborhood, the more room they have to navigate within their own organizations, which in turn would benefit the initiatives. The MDG built "pockets of trust" (Keast, Mandell, Brown, & Woolcock, 2004) with various frontline workers, welfare professionals, public entrepreneurs, and key political figures who could provide information, material resources, or key contacts and act as agents of "discourse alliances" (see Swyngedouw, 2005; Taylor, 2007). The district official responsible for participation, for example, was in daily contact with Sander. The official lobbied for budgets and provided information about municipal interests and agendas so the MDG could strategically prepare for meetings.

Having a physical space contributed to the exponential accumulation and "match-and-mix" of both cultural and social capital by facilitating

contact among citizen groups. Since the global financial crisis produced several forms of societal displacements, members of this diverse neighborhood, including recently unemployed individuals—from high- and low-income groups—social entrepreneurs, and people living on social allowance, all met at the center and discussed their plans. Civil servants, council members, and professionals were regularly invited there to meet with initiators, which fostered an image of citizens as managers and governors of the neighborhood. The Meevaart became an alternative field in which individuals developed a habitus characterized by a can-do attitude, cosmopolitanism, and democratic discussion. There was time and mental space to work out differences and commonalities across distinct organizational, cultural, and social fields and to develop new forms of citizenship together (see Ghorashi, 2014).

> What you see here is that people who come with suggestions have a feeling of co-ownership of the issues here and that is why they offer suggestions for a new order. No one comes with order proposals outside on the street, because they don't feel that they own the street. The street is of the government, of the police, of the civil guard, or of the street cleaner but not of them. Only, the point is that my tax money pays for the street. I am the overall client and the sponsor of everything here. Then why do I receive such a bad product? So, this building is where you go to commit to and discuss those types of issues… There's space to do that here. (Sander)

The Meevaart communities grew organically and exponentially. The more people engaged in the Meevaart, the more initiatives wanted a physical space that facilitated their ambitions. The organizational construction of the Meevaart was attractive because they could freely determine their own activities and realize their own ideas without having to face bureaucracy. The MDG took on the role of strengthening the supply side of participation. They started sponsoring and facilitating various initiatives in the neighborhood, some that were started by traditionally excluded groups. In practice, this meant the MDG lent its organizational legal status to bottom-up initiatives and redistributed the subsidies (economic capital) they gained. Financial-administrative and reporting responsibilities were not a barrier anymore, either. Sander started to negotiate for the interests of initiatives. He also organized the acquisition of

additional municipal buildings to create more physical space. Arvin went fulltime into discovering the "hidden potential in the neighborhood." Accumulation of cultural and social/political capital among citizens happened through his brokering contacts and negotiating information between institutional figures and initiators. This novel role division made the inclusion of various groups possible in the participation field.

However, it was obvious that only the serious parties—entrepreneurs and the higher educated—were the primary beneficiaries and players on the field of participation. Most initiators needed to prove themselves first; they had to accumulate considerable cultural and social capital before they could convert it to economic capital. There were some successful initiators from minorities, who were seen as positive examples of the social cohesion project in the neighborhood. However, they were seen more as individuals than as representatives of their traditional communities. As for other community members, accounts diverged. Some experienced the Meevaart as a "warm nest" where they could realize themselves; others voiced financial concerns about their positions as volunteers. Despite such persisting inequalities, the citizen network was strong enough to make political demands.

Further Infiltration

In 2012, the neighborhood communities came together as the Indische Neighborhood Communities to create a future agenda for the neighborhood. They went to the streets with district officials and surveyed residents about their priorities and ambitions regarding the neighborhood. Residents' responses fell into four topics: employment and work; communities; care; and space for activities. These were discussed during several fora and translated to concrete demands such as allowing initiatives and start-ups to take control of empty buildings. They published these demands in the *Citizen's Perspective* (policy) *Note* (translated from Dutch). Emphasis was on the interdependence among stakeholders in the neighborhood, with frequent use of the catchword "co-creation," which was popping up in municipal vision documents as well. The promise of more flexibility and less control by the central municipality coincided with the recentralization of district

government administration. This reorganization weakened the position of some state actors and created an opportunity for the citizenry.

In 2014, the decision-making authority of district councils was abolished. Instead, new territorial committees were appointed at the district level, and these became the link between districts and the central municipality. The committees were responsible for local implementation of municipal policy agendas, in line with budgets assigned by the central municipality. Committees were also to be the "eyes and ears" of neighborhoods so that implementation could be adapted to local needs (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2014). The MDG, aware of the precarious situation of local politicians who had lost authority and the administrative chaos the recentralization had caused, saw the committee for their area as an opportunity for citizens to have a bigger say in these developments and to get closer to the central administration.

On 9 March 2014, ten days before municipal elections, citizens invited the territorial committee candidates to an election debate in the Meevaart. Their agenda focused on the four priorities of the neighborhood, including the concrete executive proposals developed previously. Strategically, Arvin, as moderator, asked the candidates to debate the proposals until they achieved consensus on accepting or rejecting them. Clearly, ten days before the election, candidates could not afford to lose face with the citizens. Thus, they accepted the proposals and promised to lobby for them with the central municipal government. The proposals were all about creating more jobs for vulnerable groups and tackling neighborhood poverty. They involved creating educational programs and experimenting with outsourcing certain governmental tasks to communities and neighborhood businesses instead of to local institutions, thereby creating space for ethnic and nonethnic local entrepreneurs. When looking at these achievements through the Bourdieusian lens, they led to the direct allocation of economic capital to, and the accumulation of cultural capital by citizen groups.

During the debate on care and welfare, all parties found themselves in a precarious situation. A new version of the SSA was going to be introduced on 1 January 2015, whereby implementation would be decentralized to the local level. This created a situation that would require experimentation: the implementation of new measures coupled with a novel constellation of actors. This new terrain created a common ground

for dialogue among local stakeholders, an even more humble attitude of local governmental actors and a notion of shared responsibility. "We do not know how things are going to play out, but we can only solve things together," became a repetitive discourse in everyday interactions, thus creating even more space for citizens in policy implementation.

The broad policy framework created gaps in local social service delivery that citizens were eager to fill. For example, they found a reference in the later SSA about "the right to challenge," which meant that citizens could challenge the government with their own initiatives to do things better and differently. According to Sander, the MDG was the first to operationalize this aspect of the law, using it to take over youth work services in the neighborhood. This political momentum created several other opportunities for citizens to create and take over public services according to their own rules, and several of those changes showed up in district policy documents in 2014. One example is the Neighborhood Window (NW, translated from Dutch), which was part of an experimental program in societal outsourcing. This digital tool inventoried the fragmented participation support services in the neighborhood. Though the tool was funded by government subsidies, it made municipal and institutional support tools gradually obsolete and created jobs for some residents. At the time of the research, the project leaders lobbied for an NW monopoly, so budgets allocated for similar services would soon get invested in this initiative.

But there was also a particular moment during the debate that showed that some broader structural problems were being ignored by the MDG and that the doxa of the economic field was inherent in the neighborhood. A black woman raised the topic of "systematic ethnic deportation" and gentrification in the neighborhood, in relation to poverty and work opportunities. It was clear that most participants did not even understand what she was referring to; they found her opinion too radical and did not take her seriously. Her personal experience was rejected, and the discussion changed to existing discrimination within neighborhood boundaries. Arvin, as moderator, also marginalized her voice, which shows his inclination to reproduce the doxa. We ascribe this outcome to two factors. First, the inflow of marginal gentrifiers into the neighborhood was construed as something positive. The original intention of the MDG, and the community infrastructure they developed, was grounded

on the idea of mobilizing those who were better-off to contribute to the social mobility of the less powerful. Neighborhood gentrification was thus welcomed (which Arvin confirmed in an interview) because it supported the idea of social mixing. Second, the overt focus on localism in development of the neighborhood created a myopia toward the consequences of gentrification on a wider city scale. Paradoxically, the localism perspective thus wiped the greater socio-spatial inequalities caused by gentrification off the agenda, while it catalyzed a more just redistribution of capital in the neighborhood.

Conclusion and Implications

In our search of enabling alternatives, we read this case of citizen initiatives in the Indische neighborhood against Bourdieu's theory of practice. Applying Bourdieu's lens allowed us to connect analysis with generative knowledge production and gain insights into the cracks of neoliberalism in this particular context. The MDG's enabling strategies and their effects reflected a curious hybridity and blurring interplay between existing Dutch neoliberal policy regimes and political agency. The generation of alternative values and practices simultaneously undermined those regimes through collective action while it consolidated other elements of the regimes. In Bourdieusian terms, this field is alternative, albeit semiautonomous. Alternative, because the rules of policy implementation are a subject of negotiation and only partly autonomous and because these policies were born and exist within the widespread field of neoliberalism and its operating rules.

We found that the state and bureaucratic fields are not only agents in imposing the neoliberal doxa in the particular urbanity of the Indische neighborhood; they can also be utilized to disrupt that very same doxa when opportunities arise. Active citizens in the neighborhood saw political opportunities in both the policy discourse on participation and the bureaucratic structure of the decentralized policy field. The entry point for transformation were the broad policy frameworks formulated by the central state, which left the local field of implementation free of strictly established power relationships and rules regarding participation (see also

Beitel, 2013). The lack of well-defined implementation paths and the initial confusion of the local administration provided several political opportunities for citizens to become significant producers in the fields of participation and policy implementation. The vacuum in the local welfare landscape, the decentralization of welfare in the SSA policy framework, and the inflow of finances from the 40 Neighborhoods Program policy framework all contributed to this. Understanding the stakes for and the habitus of institutional parties in the game, coupled with smart timing of disruptive actions, was a crucial strategic tool for the MDG. Being the first to define the rules of the game of local participation, exploiting political sensitivities and aversiveness to risks, and filling policy language with novel democratic values were techniques they used to make room for popular voices in policy implementation. The MDG also applied discursive strategies to infiltrate the system and change the distribution of capital among stakeholders. They strategically used the slogans of collaboration and co-creation, which came directly from their critique of a policy that abandoned and responsibilized citizens, who were to contribute to welfare provision based on their own merits. Namely, the MDG appropriated the representation of the co-creation doxa for their own purposes: from citizens' responsibility to shared responsibility. This way, they enabled the mobilization of state institutions' economic capital—policy funding and empty buildings—and cultural capital—information and other provisions. Moreover, they enabled bottom-up community mobilization, catalyzing the accumulation and cross-fertilization of local cultural and social capital that mainstreamed the popular voice. Local community building decreased polarisation because it triggered both a wider and more mature civic engagement in public issues, and a climate of openness to differences. In sum, the resulting community infrastructure allowed for a democratic culture that could lead to an alternative urban future.

The cross-fertilization of this culture in which the less affluent assert themselves was established enough—as Sassen would say—to claim its place in local governance history. However, it is important to note that the informal initiatives at the Meevaart often had different motivations and goals from the MDG's, such as focusing on day-to-day activities instead of administrative arrangements or questions of direct democracy. In our view, the readiness of communities to participate in this neighborhood is a consequence of the dual presence of poverty and

unemployment together with a large creative, entrepreneurial class, both of which are effects of the financial crisis. Intentions are crucial here: it was the societal engagement and political intention of local entrepreneurs—gentrifiers—that made them enablers of a more democratic alternative, which disrupted existing neoliberal practices.

To increase socioeconomic mobility, the MDG applied a pragmatic approach of gradual, incremental "up-scaling" of income redistribution: they placed individuals from society's edges into workfare and created space for others to earn livings by innovating local welfare as public and social entrepreneurs. Improving situation for marginalized people is a laborious process because converting cultural capital to economic capital is difficult and takes time (Bourdieu, 1986). Thus, change can only take place incrementally, over a long period. The MDG's choice of generating social capital and bringing back the "social"—as a catalyst for mobilization—came with the price of consolidating volunteerism as a neoliberal policy tool of welfare retrenchment within and beyond workfare (see Mayer, 2003; Muehlebach, 2012).

The MDG's ideas were born in a time of Dutch societal polarization. The gentrification of the neighborhood that was instigated by the BCP was seen as an opportunity to counter polarizing discourses by building communities across religious, ethnic, and class differences and focusing on local democracy. Aligning with the social mixing program of the BCP, the MDG focused on social cohesion. Building on the "in and for the neighborhood" discourse made it possible to inventory, reorganize, and redistribute resources among local stakeholders. However, it omitted a critical lens on neoliberal urban restructuration and the long-term effects of continuing displacement of low-income groups from an area that was already gentrifying (see Uitermark & Bosker, 2014). This particular finding in terms of emphasizing the local to the cost of the "global" is telling of how neoliberal policymaking and political agency may constitute each other.

Namely, because urban policies were territorialized, the political opportunities created were also territorial, creating a "lock-in" effect of transformation on the neighborhood scale. In this regard, it can be concluded that the specific opportunities—"cracks" provided by neoliberal policies—have become a double-edged sword, causing a trade-off between enabling more democracy on the local level and widening socio-spatial inequalities on the wider level.

Citizens' actions after 2016 were beyond the scope of our research. However, one could speculate, for example, that citizens' greater access to the central municipality, through the mediating role of the territorial committee, could hold further opportunities for mobilizing state actors on a wider city scale, which in turn might draw attention to inequalities caused by gentrification.

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